NOSTALGIA

Larcenous stamp machines and immodesty in Hemingford Abbots

***MIKE PETTY** AND **JAMES MILNER** LOOK THROUGH THE **CAMBRIDGE NEWS** ARCHIVES AT SOME OF THE STORIES FROM THIS DAY IN THE PAST*

Wounded soldiers arriving from the Western Front in 1914

1985: Bodger's sale

BODGER'S, one of Cambridge's most long-established university menswear shops, which has been on the corner of Green Street and Sidney Street since 1922, is up for sale as a going business.

It is a very prosperous business employing ten full-time staff, but the most valuable part of the business is the freehold of the shop.

It includes sales areas on two floors, a cutting room, and canteen, together with an attached doctor's surgery with a separate entrance, and is valued at £800,000.

1974: Talking News

TODAY sees the first issue of a talking newspaper in Cambridge.

Carried on tape cassettes, it will be issued to 30 blind, elderly and infirm people and will provide a service of news based on material appearing in the Cambridge Evening News.

Pye radio provided £1,500 worth of tape recorders to launch the project and the vice chancellor has offered university recording facilities.

The Talking News was originated by Mrs DMC Matthews of the Blantyre Home for the Blind in Glisson Road and is now administered by a special trust.

1972: Land of Cockaygne

JOHN Nicholson is a tall, solemn, rangy character with a Biblical appearance.

Currently he runs two shops in Cambridge. Neither of them makes a profit.

Before that, he published an "alternative" newspaper, Cambridge Voice, a paper which ran to 16 issues.

After a skirmish with The Shilling Paper, he felt that a university element was against him.

His two shops are the King Street Market and Cockaygne in Portland Place, New Square.

The latter is an unusual shop selling a range of science fiction and occult books, "underground" periodicals, American comic books and all sorts of pamphlets.

1962: Fencing ladies

CAMBRIDGE Ladies Fencing Club started just before the war, with the swordswomen coached by Madame Perigal whose daughter, Caroline Drew, reached international status.

By the late 40s, the growing interest in the sport meant the club became mixed – but it has always maintained a strong link with the County Girls' School Fencing Club, which has a proud record in the National Schools championships.

Now it has a professional instructor, Reg Cullum, while some fencers visit Prof Harmer-Brown, the university coach.

Its members range from firemen to a wine merchant, a vet to a mental welfare officer. But they always welcome new blood.

1959: 'On the shelf'

MANY teenaged girls feel they should be engaged by the time they are 18, otherwise they are quite obviously "on the shelf".

However, Grammar School girls consider 25 quite early enough – giving them time to attend university and work in their chosen careers.

But more than half want large families of four or more children.

Practically all of the girls polled listed swimming and tennis amongst their regular pastimes, and 75 percent attend church each week.

Television is rarely watched except when there is a good play on. Pocket money is around five shillings and is spent on sweets, stamps, nylons and make-up.

1947: New home for British Restaurant

NEW premises, a new name and new services for Cambridge's British restaurant were marked by the attendance of the mayor at an informal opening ceremony.

The new premises are in the old GPO building at the corner of Petty Cury.

The new name is the Cambridge Borough Restaurant, and the new services are a more varied lunch menu instead of the old "flat rate".

The cafeteria system of serving is being introduced, by which you slide a tray along, choosing your dish, and pay when you have completed your selection.

First to eat in the new premises were the workmen employed on the job, who were entertained to lunch with a typical menu of cream of vegetable soup, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, baked and boiled potatoes, and cabbage, followed by blackberry and apple tart and custard.

1940: AA man

AC Taylor helped raise an anti-aircraft battery of Cambridge men to help defend the town from the Luftwaffe.

They had to bring down bandits, protect vital spots and force raiders to high altitude.

People grumbled because warnings were not sounded, but sounding them three or four times a night would upset morale.

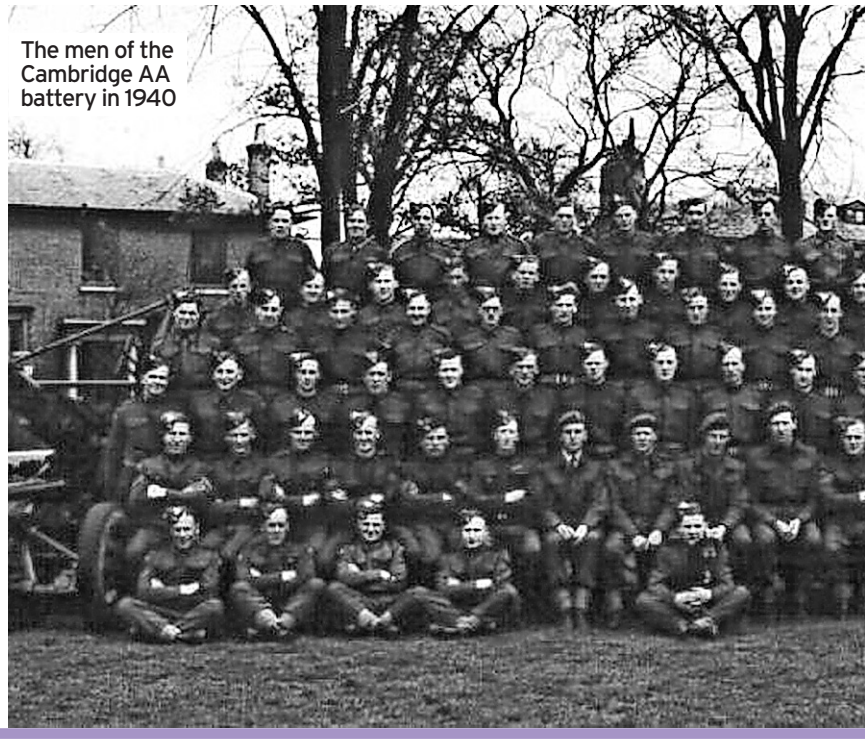
When they have solo machines floating about trying to put the wind up, Mr Taylor is glad sirens are not sounded.

1933: Stamp machine

SIR, Needing a stamp for a letter I hied down to the GPO, feeling certain its automatic machines would duly deliver the goods.

The nimble penny did function, but the halfpenny, though absorbed into the digestive machinery of the apparatus, obdurately refused to pass out the little bit of green paper.

Obviously, as serious a crime as that of obtaining halfpennies under such circumstances was a matter for our ever ready borough police.



The men of the Cambridge AA battery in 1940

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